

EMP Proposal
Training for Improving Colombian Crop Assessment Methodologies

(a) Date of proposal: August 2008

(b) Name of organization submitting proposal: Agricultural Affairs Office Bogotá

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(g) Full title of proposal: Training Colombian Officials on Agricultural Statistics Gathering and Crop Forecasting Methodologies

(h) Target market(s): National Agricultural Statistics Department, Ministry of Agriculture, and Colombian International Corporation (CCI, ERS/NASS equivalent).

(i) Current conditions in the target market(s) affecting the intended commodity or product:

Progress in Colombia of improving the quality and quantity of agricultural information (i.e. production, area, yields) is very slow due to a lack of knowledge and training in agricultural data-gathering techniques and methodologies. Coverage, timeliness and accuracy are weak and make reporting on Colombia's agricultural sector difficult. In addition, agriculture trade policy decisions in Colombia are often biased due to a lack of information, which can reduce or prevent U.S. products from being imported.

(j) Description of problem(s):

In Colombia, trade policy decisions such as opening the market to imports of agricultural commodities or reducing duties to allow imports to supply market shortages often rest on producers' information. It is crucial that the Colombian government have independent, timely, reliable, and accurate information; and needs support from the United States on knowledge and technology transfer, and on modern crop measuring systems and analysis techniques. The Ministry of Agriculture is making efforts to improve its information

systems; however, it is unable to advance qualitatively without help from institutions with expertise like USDA.

(k) Project objectives:

- To help the Ministry of Agriculture to improve its methods of estimating and measuring planted area, production, and yields, forecasting the effects of weather on crops, and developing and analyzing agricultural data.
- For USDA experts to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and evaluate the Colombian system in order to suggest and provide training that will bring improvement to the Colombian system.

(l) Performance measures:

- **Immediate:**

Post will meet with Ministry and CCI representatives to set dates and identify appropriate participants. An initial assessment of topics to be covered will be made.

- **Short-Term:**

Evaluatory trip will take place for USDA experts and Seminar participants to assess the exact needs of Colombian Analysts. USDA personnel will conduct meetings with Colombian analysts to receive detailed information on the methods they are using and further understand how relevant variables are being measured.

In Washington, USDA experts will formulate a Seminar and break out sessions designed specifically to address deficiencies in Colombian system.

One-day seminar will be held for a targeted and technical audience of approximately 100 persons from CCI and the Ministry. Break-out sessions will be held the following day by area of specialization.

One-on-one meetings and visits will also take place at the Ministry and prominent local extension offices to help transfer techniques.

- **Long-Term:**

Ministry of Agriculture will have available and provide timely information on the Agriculture sector and its perspectives that will make all interested parties to share the same and reliable information.

(m) Rationale:

Critical agricultural information for business and trade purposes and policy decisions are often inaccessible to the government. There is not only a lack of consistent and timely information, but also weak measurement techniques that would otherwise keep the country informed on the agricultural situation. In this situation, government decisions on imports from the U.S. are highly dependent and under strong pressure from the private groups interests. The Colombian agricultural sector is a highly protected sector, however the Colombian market shows a large potential for U.S. products under a less controlled agricultural market.

(n) Clear demonstration that successful implementation will benefit a particular industry as a whole, not just the applicant(s):

The information will be public and the Colombian industries of agricultural products will prove, based on government information, the need to allow imports to supply their demand. It will also drive trade policy to be less protectionist, allowing us to expand market access.

(o) Explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance:

The Colombian Ministry of Agriculture does not have the funding to contract the required technical assistance. The Ministry of Agriculture budget, for several reasons, is under constant pressure and it can not even cover its basic needs.

(p) Specific description of activity/activities to be undertaken:

- **Phase I:** FAS/Bogota, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, will organize meetings and field trips for an initial visit by USDA experts in order to assess the deficiencies in the Colombian system. USDA will interact with persons directly involved in gathering, evaluating and analyzing information. They will also be familiarized with the methodologies used by analysts doing crop forecasting in the Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Phase II:** The second visit would last 3 days and would include a seminar, break-out sessions, and individual meetings at the Colombian analysts' place of work. The seminar, provided by 5 USDA experts from NASS, ERS, FAS (OGA/IPA) or AMS, would be offered to a larger but targeted audience from CCI (Ministry of Agriculture's Research Arm equivalent to ERS and NASS) and the Ministry of Agriculture. The seminar would include USDA's crop forecasting techniques and focus on building up the weak areas of the Colombian system found in the initial visit. The second day would be comprised of breakout sessions and would provide more specific information on the different areas of crop forecasting and measurement. The third half-day will be set aside for on-site meetings at the ministry, CCI, and/or at local extension offices to work with Colombian analysts in their place of work.
- **Phase III:** Post will follow-up to evaluate the implementation of the proposed improvements, and will report results to Washington. If additional follow-up is needed, a further EMP proposal can be elaborated.

(q) Time line(s) for implementation of activity, including start and end dates:

- **Phase I:** The assessment visit will take place during the last quarter of 2008, followed by the development of a seminar in Washington.
- **Phase II:** The seminar, breakout sessions, and office visits will be programmed during 2 ½ days, starting in the second quarter of 2009.
- **Phase III:** The follow-up and evaluation of the project will be carried out beginning in the last quarter of 2009.

(r) Information on whether similar activities are or have previously been funded with USDA sources in target country/countries (e.g., under MAP and/or FMD programs):

While similar activities, as listed here, have taken place, this request is unique in that it specifically targets one Ministry of Agriculture program.

(s) Detailed line item activity budget. Cost items should be allocated separately to each participating organization. Expense items constituting a proposed activity's overall budget (e.g., salaries, travel expenses, consultant fees, administrative costs, etc.), with a line item cost for each, should be listed, clearly indicating:

- (1) Which items are to be covered by EMP funding:
- (2) Which by the participating U.S. organization(s); and
- (2) Which by foreign third parties (if applicable). Cost items for individual consultant fees should show calculation of daily rate and number of days. Cost items for travel expenses should show number of trips, destinations, cost, and objective for each trip. Qualifications of applicant(s) should be included as an attachment.

Funding for equipment, printing materials, translation, and miscellaneous expenses will be covered by the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture. All other expenses of the proposed program will be covered by EMP funds. Post plans to coordinate this project so that it compliments a USAID program soon to be carried out in Colombia that will help distribute agricultural information to farmers.

EMP Funding Request - Training on Information Handling	
I. Advance Team for Assessment –	
5 USDA Participants (7 days - two days of travel)	
Tickets (1 round trip ticket for 5 speakers)	\$6,250
Lodging in Bogota for 5 speakers	\$9,030
Local flights (1 round trip for 5 speakers)	\$2,300
M&IE in Bogota for 5 speakers	\$3,570
Miscellaneous (taxes)	\$250
Miscellaneous (transport)	\$800
Medical Insurance	\$1,050
Subtotal Advance Team for Assessment	\$23,250
II. Seminar and 1 day break-out meetings and office visits (4 days – 2 traveling)	
Seminar 1 day for 200 participants	
EMP Funding	
Tickets (1 round trip tickets for 5 speakers)	\$6,250
Lodging in Bogota for 5 speakers	\$3,870
M&IE in Bogota for 5 speakers	\$1,530
Miscellaneous (taxes)	\$250
Miscellaneous (transport)	\$800
Medical Insurance	\$450
Venue (Includes lunch, breakfast, Conference room)	\$7,000
Ministry of Agriculture Funding	
Equipment (includes projector, screens, translation equipment)	\$1,700
Printing Materials	\$2,000
Miscellaneous	\$1,000
Translation (includes two people for two days)	\$1,500
Subtotal Seminar and break-out meetings	\$26,350
Total Estimated Budget	\$49,600
Ministry of Agriculture's contribution	\$6,200
EMP Funding Requested	\$43,400